

CONSERVATIVE SPOILERS

Domestic partnerships delayed by lawsuit

On Jan. 2, the plan was, same-sex partners could head on down to the county clerk's office, pay some money, sign some forms, get a few (in the state of Oregon, at least) of the thousands of automatic rights straight couples get when they get married – and then eat some pie. As usual, the killjoy religious right ruined that fun.

The timeline: The Oregon Legislature passed a domestic partnership law last spring, one that would not conflict with the anti-gay-marriage Measure 36, which passed in November of 2004. Some homophobic folks from Tennessee calling themselves "Restore America" gathered signatures for a referendum on this law and on a civil rights law which passed at the same time. The Oregon Elections Division determined that the group didn't have enough valid signatures for either referendum.

Then in December, another anti-gay group (this one from Arizona) filed a lawsuit (*Lemons v. Bradbury*), saying that those whose signatures had been disqualified had been denied a fundamental right. And Judge Michael Mosman issued a temporary restraining order, which means that the domestic partner law can't go into effect until Feb. 1 at the earliest (when there's another hearing). So same-sex couples can't get domestically partnered for a while. Basic Rights Oregon held vigils across the state on the original partnership celebration date, Jan. 2, and has planned a rally for Jan. 30 in Portland before the next hearing. For more info on supporting this baby step towards marriage equality, go to www.basicrights.org and start planning now to represent the Willamette Valley at the rally. – Suzi Steffen



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